

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 USIE-00 IO-11

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SAM-01 SAB-01 ACDA-05 OMB-01

EUR-12 SAJ-01 /083 W

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O 071320Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8535

INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 1241

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, LE, SY, PLO

SUBJECT: PROGRESS OF SYRIAN MEDIATION AS OF DAMASCUS SUMMIT:

AN ASSESSMENT

1. SUMMARY: AS PRES. FRANGIE AND PRIMIN KARAME MEET SYRIAN PRES. ASAD IN DAMASCUS TODAY, WE BELIEVE THAT LOOSE ENDS ON DETAILS OF INTRA-LEBANESE POLITICAL DEAL REMAIN TO BE FINALIZED. AGREEMENT HAS APPARENTLY BEEN REACHED MR PALESTINIAN/LEBANESE ASPECT OF CRISIS AND WE EXPECT SUMMIT TO DEAL PRIMKRILY WITH THIS SUBJECT, WITH ONLY MOST GENERAL REFERENCE TO DOMESTIC POLITICAL REFORM FIGURING IN FINAL COMMUNIQUE. CHRISKTIANS CONTINUE AT THIS POINT TO BE COMMITTED TO TRYING POLITICAL, RATHER THAN MILITARY, ROUTE TO STABILITY IN LEBANON AND ARE CONTINUING TO SUPPORT SYRIAN INITIATIVE, BUT WILL WISH TO HAGGLE A BIT MORE BEFORE PUTTING STAMP OF APPROVAL ON POLITICAL AND SOCIAL REFORM PACKAGE. RESOLUTION OF PALESTINIAN QUESTION, WHICH IS KEY ITEM IN MARONITE CONSENSUS, PROBABLQY WILL LEND ADDED IMPETUS TO MOVEMENT ON INTLG-LEBANESE ISSUES AND MAY HAVE BEEN MADE MARONITE PRE-CONDITION TO FURTHER PROGRESS. THUS, WHILE DAMASCUS SUMMIT IS NOT END-ALL  
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RE LEABNESE CRISIS, IT HAS SYMBOLIC IMPORTANCE AS

STATEMENT THAT CIVIL STRIFE PHASE OF CONFLICT IS OVER,  
AND CONCRETE SIGNIFICANCE IN OPENING WAY FOR MORE  
COMPLETE RESOLUTION OF OUTSTANDING QUESTIONS. END  
SUMMARY.

2. PRES. FRANGIE AND PRIMIN KARAME JOURNEY TODAY, 7  
FEB., BY AIR TO DAMASCUS FOR LONG AWAITED SUMMIT MEET-  
ING AMID STRICT SECURITY MEASURES IN LEBANON INTENDED  
TO GUARD AGAINST PROVOCATIONS WHICH COULD UNDERMINE  
POLITICAL PROGRESS. OFFICIAL LEBANESE DELEGATION  
ACCOMPANYING FRANGIE AND KARAME INCLUDES CIVILIAN AND MILITARY  
FUNCTIONARIES RATHER THAN POLITICAL FIGURES AS SOME  
COMMENTATORS HAD EXPECTED. (FRANGIE'S ADVISOR, LUCIEN  
DAHDAH INFORMS US HE WILL BE PRESENT IN AN UNOFFICIAL  
CAPACITY, AT SYRIA'S REQUEST.)

3. DESPITE TALK ABOUT A "GLOBAL SOLUTION" TO THE  
LEBANESE CRISIS EMERGING FROM THE KDAMASCUS SUMMIT,  
WE SUSPECT MEETING WILL BE PRODUCTIVE BUT NOT RPT NOT  
DECISIVE. DIFFICULTY OF KGETTING ACCURATE FIX ON REAL  
STATE OF PLAY IN SYRIAN INITIATIVE IS COM-  
POUNDED BY LIKELIHOOD THAT FONMIN KHADDAM AND HIS  
AIDES ALONE HAVE ALL STRANDS OF PROBLEM IN HAND. KHADDAM  
IS EXPRESSING CONFIDENCE IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE, BUT IT  
APPEKNS UNLIKELY TO US THAT FULL AGREEMENT ON INTRA-  
LEBANESE ASPECTS OF SETTLEMENT HAVE BEEN ACHIEVED AT  
THIS TIME. WE SUSPECT THAT SYRIANS HAVE FOUND RESOLU-  
TION OF THIS MATTER MORE DIFFICULT ANDOUR8-CONSUMING  
THAN ORGINALLY ANTICIPATED.

4. CLOSEST WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO GET TO FRESH SPORE  
ON KHADDAM'S FAT AND FURIOUS TRAIL OF CONSULTATIONS  
WAS CONVERSATION 6 FEB. WITH DR. NJIB QARANOUH, SUNNI  
MUSLIM NOTABLE AND MEMBER OF ILL-FATED NATIONAL DIALOGUE  
COMMITTEE LAST FALL. QARANOUH WHO MET WITH KHADDAM  
ON 5 FEB,  
SAID SYRIAN MEDIATOR PROVIDED OUTLINE OF  
PROGRESS ON TWO IMPORTAUNT KFACETS OF POLITICAL REFORM  
AS FOLLOWS:

(A) PRESIDENCY WILL REMAIN IN MARONITE HANDS ON  
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BASIS OF UNWRITTEN "GENTLEMEN'S AGREEMENT" (I.E., STATUS  
QUO).

(B) SEATS IN PARLIAMENT WILL BE DIVIDED EQUALLY  
BEWTWEEN CHRISTIANS AND MUSLIMS, BUT DRAFT AGREEMENT DOES  
NT RPT NOT IN PRESENT FORM SPELL OUT PROVISION FOR  
ELECTION OF PRESIDENT BY GREATER THAN SIMPLE MAJORITY  
NOR MENTION EVEN MORE SUBSTANTIAL MAJORITIES NEEDED FOR  
SO-CALLED "IMPORTANT QUESTIONS".

4. WE ARE NOT PREPARED TO BELIE THAT CHRISTIAN LEADER-  
SHIP HAS GIVEN FINAL APPROVAL TO AGREEMENT IN THIS FORM,  
ALTHOUGH IT IS OUR BELIEF THAT THEY ARE ASEEKING POLITICAL,  
AS OPPOSED TO MILITARY, SOLUTION AND SUPPORT SYRIAN  
INITIATIVE. KNWOLEDGZWBPE CHRISTIAN DJMRANLIST WITH  
EXCELLENT CONTWPTS IN KASLIK TODL EMBOFF 6 FEB. THAT  
LBARONITE LEADERS HAVE NOT RPT NOT SIGNED ON DOTTED LINE  
RE SYRIAN FIVE POINTS. KASLIK GROUP IS PREPARED,  
HE  
ASSERTED, TO ACCCEPT REFORMS ON THOSE POINTS ON CONDI-  
I  
TION THAT CHRISTIAN-SPONSORED PROPOSALS KMAKING AGREEMENT  
MORE PALATABLE (SUCH AS ELECTION OF PRESIDENT BY 55 PERCENT OF  
VOTES) ARE ACCEPTED. THIS ASSESSMENT AGREES SUBSTAN-  
TIALY WITH NUMBER OF  
OTHER REPORTS THAT MARONITES  
WILL WISH TO SEE MORE DETAILED AGREEMENT BEFORE  
AFFIXING FINAL SEAL OF APPROVAL.

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 USIE-00 IO-11

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8536

INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BEIRUT 1241

5. DESPITE ABSENCE OF FULL AGREEMENT ON POLITICAL  
REFORM, DAMASCUS SUMMIT ISC CRUCIAL EVENT BOTH IN  
TERMS OF SYMBOLIC END OF COMBAT PHASE OF LEBANESE  
CIVIL CRISIS AND, WE STRONGLY SUSPECT, IN FULFILLMENT

OF PRECONDITIONS FOR FURTHER PROGRESS TOWARD A "GLOBAL SOLUTION". ALL COMMENTATORS AGREE THAT AGREEMENT IN WRITING HAS BEEN ACHIEVED ON LEBANESE/PALESTINIAN

ASPECT OF CRISIS (I.E., IMPLEMENTATION OF CAIRO AGREEMENT AND MELKART PROTOCOL). KHADDAM CONFIRMED QARANOUH THAT SYRIA WILL INSURE PALESTINIAN ADHERENCE TO THESE COMMITMENTS AND EXPLAINED THAT THE WEIGHT OF SYRIAN GUARANTEE IS CLEARLY IN FAVOR OF SUPPORT FOR SOVEREIGNTY OF LEBANESE STATE.

6. LOOKING TOWARD DAMASCUS SUMMIT AND RESULTING COMMUNIQUE, WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT SUBSTANCE WILL DEAL PRIMARILY WITH LEBANESE/PALESTINIAN RELATIONSHIP. THIS EMPHASIS WILL BE CONSISTENT WITH PRIMUM KARAME'S PUBLIC DECLARATION THAT SUMMIT WILL CONCENTRATE ON "SECURITY AND SOVEREIGNTY" OF LEBANON--CODE WORDS FOR REGULATION OF ARMED PALESTINIAN PRESENCE IN THIS COUNTRY. THERE WILL PROBABLY BE SOME REFERENCE TO CONFIDENTIAL

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DOMESTIC REFORM, BUT WE ANTICIPATE LITTLE MORE THAN A LICK AND A PROMISE ON THIS MATTER. CONTROL OF PALESTINIAN ACTIVITIES IN LEBANON IS ITEM HIGH ON CHRISTIAN AGENDA, AND KASLIK GROUP MAY WELL HAVE DEMANDED RESOLUTION OF PALESTINIAN ISSUE PRIOR RPT PRIOR TO CROSSING EYES AND DOTTING TEES RE INTERNAL POLITICAL REFORM. DAMASCUS COMMUNIQUE COULD PROBABLY GO SO FAR AS TO PROCLAIM ACCEPTANCE IN PRINCIPLE OF SYRIAN FIVE POINTS, ALTHOUGH IT NEED NOT BE VERY SPECIFIC.

7. THERE IS EVIDENCE THAT QUESTION OF MUSLIM DESERTERS FROM LEBANESE ARMY, ANOTHER SECURITY CONCERN OF THE CHRISTIANS, MAY ALSO BE RESOLVED IN SHORT UN. PROBLEM IS EPITOMIZED BY CASE OF LT. AHMED KHATIB. ARMY DESERTERS STILL WITH KHATIB (PROBABLY NO MORE THAN 30-40 MEN AT THIS TIME) WILL, WE UNDERSTAND, BE REINTEGRATED INTO ARMY WITHOUT PENALTY. AS FOR KHATIB HIMSELF, KHADDAM TOLD QARANOUH THAT "KHATIB WILL END UP AS POLITICAL EXILE IN DAMASCUS."

8. RESOLUTION OF THESE ISSUES OF "SECURITY AND SOVEREIGNTY" SHOULD OPEN THE WAY FOR POST-SUMMIT BARGAINING ON REFORM QUESTIONS. IT WOULD NOT SURPRISE US TO SEE QUICKLY UPON HEELS OF SUMMIT, INITIAL WITHDRAWALS OF SOME PALESTINE LIBERATION ARMY (PLA) ELEMENTS IF SECURITY PERMITS. ON THE OTHER HAND, CHRISTIANS MIGHT FIND THAT LOW PROFILE PLA PRESENCE SERVES THEIR INTERESTS.

9. THIS ANALYSIS REPRESENTS OUR MOST OPTIMISTIC ASSESSMENT OF FACTS OF SITUATION AS WE KNOW THEM. IT ASSUMES PEACEFUL INTENTIONS ON THE PART OF MAJOR FACTIONS, INCLUDING THE CHRISTIANS, AND THE WILL TO CONTAIN AND OVERCOME OBJECTIONS AND PROVOCATIONS BY EXTREMISTS AND REJECTIONISTS ON ALL SIDES. THE SCENARIO PRESENTED HERE WOULD SEEM TO BE SUPPORTED BY THE ACTION (OR INACTION) OF THE KASLIK GROUP AT ITS MOST RECENT MEETING ON FEB 6. NO STATEMENT REGARDING THE DAMASCUS UMMIT EKMANATED FROM THE SESSION, BUT PHALANGIST LEADER PIERRE GEMAYEL EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE SUMMIT WOULD BE FRUITFUL AND "PERMIT A FINAL SETTLEMENT OF THE LEBAN-  
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ESE CRQEIS." SEEN IN THIS LIGHT, THE DAMAS US MEETING IS NOT THE CONSECRATION OF A COMPLETE SETTLEMENT THAT SOME COMMENTATORS PROFESS TO DETECT IN ITS CONVOCATION. DAMASCUS REPRESENTS NECESSARY INTERIM STEP WHICH, IF SUCCESSFUL, WILL BE FOLLOWED BY FURTHER CONSULTATIONS AND NEGOTIATIONS IN LEBANON.  
LAMBRAKIS

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